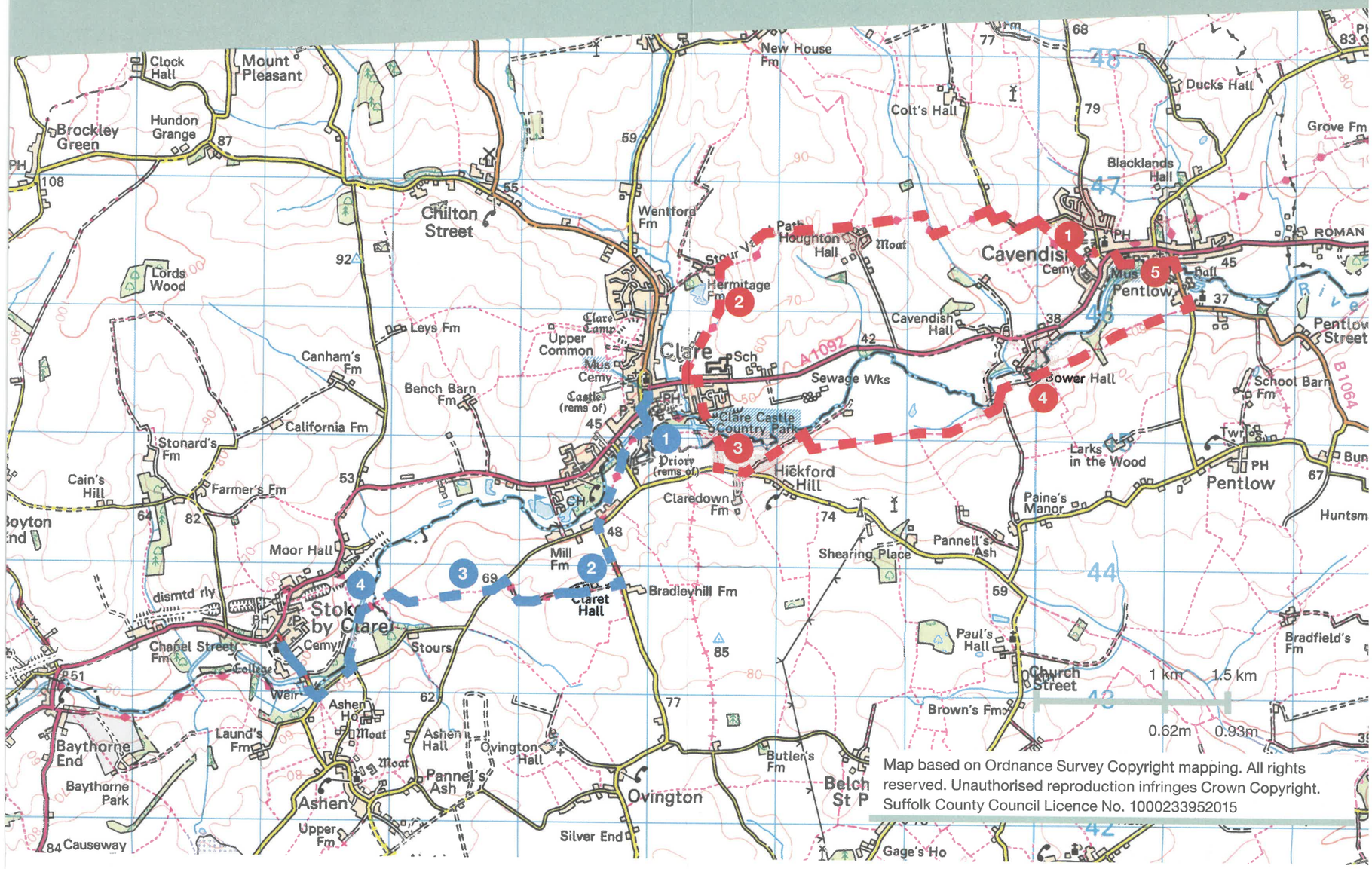
Angels & Pinnacles – Church Heritage Trails



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Route 1 — 3.5 miles / 5.6 km each way

St Peter and St Paul Clare to St John the Baptist Stoke by Clare

Leaving the church by the main south porch, go straight ahead through the market place and follow the signs for Clare Castle Country Park.

Take the road left into Malting Lane, noting the elaborate plasterwork 'pargetting' on the Broadway houses to your right. Continue on past the old Maltings, now an antiques centre, to the footpath which leads over a bridge. Turn right to take either the lower or the higher footpath. Beyond the trees to your left, is the site of the 13th Century Clare Priory. (1) Suppressed by Henry VIII in 1538, it returned to the ownership of the Augustinian friars in 1953 and is now a parish church and retreat centre.

Walk for about 400 yards to the road and turn left to cross over the bridge, then take the right hand path beside the field with trees on your right. At the corner of the field, bear right to cross the plank bridge. Follow the path with the river on your right and gardens on your left. After the second wooden gate, turn immediately left through a private garden, emerging on to a road.

Turn right, then left up Bradley Hill. Almost at the top, turn right into Claret Hall drive. (2) Edward III's third son Lionel once lived here. Pause at the hall to admire views across the Stour Valley to your right, then follow the track through the woods and continue with paddocks on your left.

Keep right at the fork and, emerging from the wood, head across the field to the road. Turn left and, after a few yards, turn right. Once into the field, fork left, following the path round the field's edge. (3) The tower of Stoke by Clare church should now be visible through the trees directly ahead.

Take the path through the middle of the next two fields, cross a plank bridge with railings and walk through the meadow on the other side. At the river, turn left with the weir on your right. (4) Follow the path until you reach a metal gate leading on to the road. Turn right and follow this narrow lane for about 400 yards, then turn right towards Stoke by Clare and Haverhill. Cross the bridge and carry on up this road past the 30 mph sign, cemetery and playing field.

After the white houses on your left, turn left to follow the path into the Stoke by Clare churchyard.

Explore the church and return by the same route.

Pay and display car parking is available at Malting Lane, Clare

Toilets are available at Clare church and at Clare Castle Country Park

Clare has a wide choice of places to eat and drink

Visit the Clare Ancient House Museum next to the church to find out more.

Route 2 — 9 miles / 14.5 km

St Mary's Cavendish to St Peter and St Paul Clare

From the church, cross Peacocks Road and take the path in front of the Five Bells, crossing the stile by the cemetery. Follow the path round a meadow, turn left along the edge of a field, over a bridge and round to the right, bordering the 14th century Nether Hall until you come to the road. (1)

Turn left and follow the road uphill for about quarter of a mile, taking the path just past a house on your left. At the bottom of the hill, follow the path to the right and cross over a bridge. Turn right, then left, following the Stour Valley Path to medieval Houghton Hall, now a spa.

Keep straight and remain on the path as it meanders to Hermitage Farm. (2) Bear left, past lakes on your right, before meeting the A1092 road to Clare.

Cross the road, go over the bridge and follow the path left past the cemetery towards Clare Castle Country Park where you'll find a former railway station and the Norman castle keep, built by the de Clares who were mighty feudal barons in the 13th Century. From here, it is a short walk along Malting Lane and up Market Hill to the church. Don't miss the Ancient House Museum by the churchyard.

To resume your walk, retrace your steps to the Country Park, picking up the river path from the Malting Lane car park.

Cross the bridge and take the path to your right to cross the field diagonally, taking you over the Stour into Essex. On reaching the road, turn left. (3) After 200 yards, pick up the bridleway to your left down again towards the Stour. At the river, turn right across the field. The track heads left and finally through woodland before again meeting the river.

At the T-junction of paths, turn right across the field. Continue to the lane where you turn left to pass Bower Hall. (4) Bearing slightly to the right, keep on the bridleway for about a mile towards Pentlow Hall.

At the road, turn left and cross the bridge back into Suffolk. Cross a stile on the left and walk by the river where there is a fine water mill. Ascend the bank on the right and follow the path through a private garden to reach the road near the Sue Ryder Museum. (5) Turn left to return to Cavendish church.

On street parking is available at Cavendish

Cavendish has a choice of pubs and tearooms, not far from the church, serving food

Timetables and planners for public transport are available at www.suffolkonboard.com

More walks and great days out at: www.discoversuffolk.org.uk

Angels & Pinnacles Church Heritage Trails

No.5 in the series: Clare cluster

A Step Further

St Peter and St Paul's Kedington to St John the Baptist Stoke by Clare - 5.5 miles/9 km each way

Leave Kedington church by the south porch and take the footpath opposite the church gate. At the bottom, turn right to follow the road to the Barnardiston Arms where you fork left and continue to the water treatment plant. Proceed along the path for about a mile until you cross a wooden plank bridge at the edge of a field.

Cross the field, turning left at the end, and continue until you cross the River Stour where you ascend a slope, passing kennels on your right. Bear left, then fork right onto a grassy track towards Water Hall Farm buildings where the path curves to the left up a steep slope alongside a hedge.

Pick up the path to the right through a gap in the hedge and head across the field towards a line of trees at the field edge. Cross to the next field and follow the downward path to the road. Turn right and continue for two thirds of a mile to pass under a disused railway bridge shortly before the junction.

Turn right, heading for the River Stour bridge. See the 18th century Baytorne Mill, on your right, extended in the 19th century to add a steam-engine house with a tall chimney. The Stour used to have 23 mills on it. Turn left at the junction and note the 'Swan' house on the opposite side. This used to be a pub and home of Martha Blewitt who had nine husbands, the last of whom survived her when she died in 1681.

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Fork left into the drive of Baytorne Park, built in 1668, and look out for a small gate to your right. Cross the meadow, heading towards a pond with a summer pavilion. Keep the pond to your left and cross a stile to enter a little spinney with the Stour on your left. Continue ahead to a kissing gate and follow the path, past the sluice, to Ashen Lane where you turn left.

Up the hill you will pass Stoke College school on your left. This is the site of an ancient priory, later a medieval college of priests, whose last dean, Matthew Parker, Archbishop under Elizabeth I, was said to have attended Anne Boleyn on the scaffold. You will soon see the cemetery on your right and shortly after, look out for a little gate on your left into Stoke by Clare churchyard.

Take a picnic lunch in the churchyard before heading back by the same route.

www.angelsandpinnacles.org.uk

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THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich

St Peter and St Paul Clare – St Mary's Cavendish
St John the Baptist Stoke by Clare – St Peter and St Paul Kedington

The Angels & Pinnacles project covers six clusters of churches across Suffolk. Take a walk between these four churches to combine the best of the countryside with Suffolk's magnificent medieval heritage.

Clare

Handsome Clare church was built on the back of the 15th century wool cloth trade and looks like a great ship with its mast-like pinnacled turrets.

Light streams through the lofty arcades of this beautiful building. Discover the gallery of medieval faces carved in stone between the roof arches and climb up to the Priory Pew in the south aisle. Don't miss the eagle lectern of Flemish brass, said to be the gift of Elizabeth I.

Kedington

This late 13th century building is one of the most treasured in the country. It was virtually untouched by the Victorians, apart from the skylights in the nave roof which sheds light on the remarkable Barnardiston monuments resplendent with effigies, angels and skulls.

The Barnardistons were Lords of the Manor from 13th century until 1745 and their magnificent manorial pew dates back to 1610.

Cavendish

Set against one of the prettiest village greens in Suffolk, St Mary's displays fine flint flushwork on its clerestory and battlements and you can see the chimney of the priest's fireplace at the top of the tower. Inside the tower are wooden crosses brought back from the graves of local men who fell in WWI.

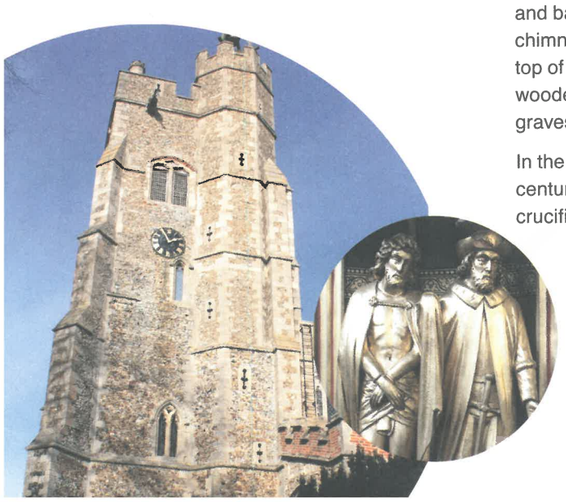
In the north aisle is a gorgeous 16th century Flemish alabaster of the crucifixion framed by a gilded reredos.

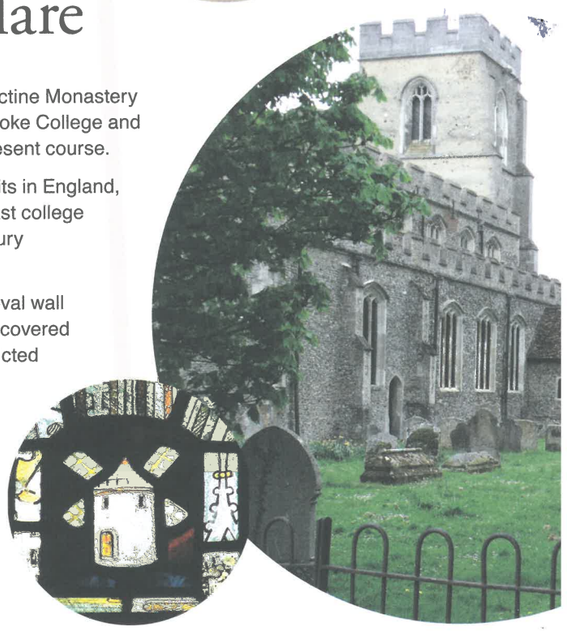
Stoke by Clare

This church was part of a Benedictine Monastery until 1415, the monks founding Stoke College and diverting the River Stour to its present course.

Inside is one of the smallest pulpits in England, named for Matthew Parker, the last college dean and Archbishop of Canterbury who started his career here.

Two rare treasures are the medieval wall painting in the organ chamber uncovered in 1948 and the tiny windmill depicted in 15th century glass.





Other trails in the series:

Framlingham Woolpit

Eye Southwold

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